



WALKABILITY METRICS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Over 75% of US seniors live in low density neighborhoods with few places to which they can safely walk yet seniors walk for an increasing share of all trips as they age. There are multiple guides and metrics to measure and promote neighborhood walkability but many either miss issues important to seniors OR emphasize elements that might serve younger people but are actually viewed by seniors as barriers to walking. Most existing walkability guidelines and indices also do not link directly to specific infrastructure improvements and supportive programs; they merely measure deficiencies.

Many walkability metrics focus on the needs of younger travellers walking for transportation, that is to specific destinations. Seniors tend to walk for recreation, to socialize, for physical activity, and to maintain a connection to their neighborhood; they may have no set destination or the destinations are incidental. Walkability metrics should acknowledge senior walkability needs and perceptions by identifying: 1) those needs and desires they share equally with others; 2) those that they value very differently, and 3) those factors and situations sought by other travellers that seniors find difficult or frightening.

This research project will review, evaluate, and synthesize the body of interdisciplinary literature on how seniors view the walkability of their neighborhoods, the reasons why they walk, and the improvements they seek to facilitate additional walking. Based on focus groups with diverse seniors in the mega-region that assess perceptions of neighborhood walkability, researchers will develop a concise set of powerful metrics capturing the most relevant and important features of the built environment supporting walkability for diverse seniors.

Creating Neighborhood Walkability Metrics that Represent the Needs of Older People; Developing Appropriate Infrastructure and Policy Interventions (#CM2-26)

Dr. Sandra Rosenbloom,
University of Texas at Austin

06/01/2018 - 05/31/2019

Project Information Form:

<http://sites.utexas.edu/cm2/files/2018/03/Year-2-Sandra-Rosenbloom-Creating-Neighborhood.pdf>

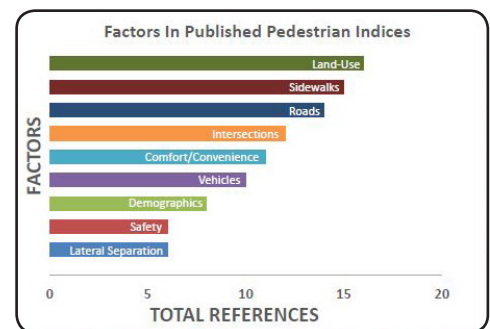


Chart synthesizing the major elements stressed by twenty-five (25) walkability studies. The least stressed elements, Safety and Lateral Separation, are ones often most important to seniors.